1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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observe the spontaneous gesture with which men, on leaving the Mission, automatically threw off their loincloths at the Mission fence and headed for the bush as naked as the day they were born. Women, in pre-white days, habitually carried a piece of bark which they held in front of themselves whenever they met a male. As soon as string or rope was introduced by the early white contacts, the women found it more convenient to tie some sort of band around their waists and double the piece of bark over this waistband. This was much handier since it left the hands free, but the bark, being stiff and unsecured, was at best a very capricious covering, and old women in the midst of public arguments often tore off their aprons and threw them at their opponents as a gesture of contempt.

Young women were more decorous and fussed modestly with their bark aprons when young men were present rather in the same way as American coeds fuss with their skirts in crowded classrooms. Theoretically, young women were supposed never to meet either young men or men outside their own household, and so the bark apron, carried in the hand, was in aboriginal times merely something to have in case of emergency. It was noticeable in Tiwi ceremonies that when the women danced, they did nothing with their hands. We think this was because, in pre-white days, their right hands, at least, were needed to hold their bark aprons in front of their pubic regions, since at dances they were in the presence of strange men.

This brief account of the daily and yearly life of the Tiwi households enables us to draw a few important conclusions about their economic life:

1. Compared with many of the mainland tribes, the Tiwi were economically rather well-off, in that the bigger household units were usually able to produce a food surplus.

2. This food surplus varied directly with the number of working wives that a household head possessed.

3. A household head with many wives was therefore, in Tiwi terms, a wealthy man who could retire entirely from the food quest and devote his time to other activities.

4. Such men were able to devote full time to other activities such as manufacturing useful and ceremonial objects and participation in ceremonial affairs and public life.

5. Wealthy men, active in one or all of these pursuits, were the "big men" of the tribe. In each band there were two or three such men, and in the whole tribe perhaps less than twenty had attained full success or were ranked by public opinion as being the most admired and influential. The next chapter examines the career patterns by which every male Tiwi sought to become, and a few succeeded in becoming, a big man.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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arm rings, *jairinas* (Pl. 31H), they seated themselves outside the *milimika*, but took no part in the subsequent rituals. 881 [301]

Other fully initiated men led initiates of the *Wadjeniati* grade to the *wuringalua* tree, where the yams had been stored on the second morning, told them to sit down and erected a low screen of boughs in front so that the initiates could not be seen from the *milimika*.

The *Mikingulas* first painted the bodies of the *Wadjeniati* initiates with yellow paint, then decorated them with many cane rings, *jairinas* (Pl. 31H), on their upper arms, hair-string belts, *ularini*, around their waists and goose-feather balls, *tokwiangas* (Pl. 31B), on their necks, arms and wrists (see Pl. 42J). This ritual admitted them to the grade of *Mikinatrina* and *Mikinatrininga* respectively. 881 302 [301]

After the *Wadjeniati* initiates were decorated, the senior grades of the *kulama* painted their faces, bodies, hair and beards with elaborate designs in red, yellow, black and white. In one design, peculiar to the *kulama*, the aborigines covered one side of their faces with red paint, and the other side with black,[87] the two colours being separated with a line of yellow (Pl. 42M). The men painted a complex design, usually in red and white on their hair and beards.[88] Some of the men also decorated their children.

The leader of the *kulama* then assembled everyone to see the *Mikinatrina* initiates perform their first dance, which they had been quietly practising for some time. 535 881

At a given signal, each *Mikinatrina* stood up in turn and, gaily decorated with body paint and coloured ceremonial ornaments, and holding a flat fighting club, *juruwila*, in either hand, performed his first dance. As each initiate danced, the assembled people applauded, slapping their buttocks in approbation of both the dancing and the appearance of the initiates. [201]

When the *Mikinatrinas* had finished their dance, the female initiates, the *Mikinatrininga*s, similarly decorated, but without the clubs, individually performed their dances. Still painted and wearing their decorations, the male and female *Mikinatrinas* seated themselves outside of the *milimika* beside the newly created *Kilipaniatis*.

After the initiates had finished their dances, several of the *Mikingulas* entered the *milimika* and chanted another series of secular songs. [533]

[87] Spencer, 1928, p. 674, who saw a *kulama* ceremony during 1911, refers to this curious form of facial decoration.

[88] The method of colouring the hair with intricate designs is of some interest. The aboriginal, loading his fingers and thumb with wet ground-up ochre, pinched the hair, instead of rubbing the colour into it. By this means, the operator was able to keep sharp well-defined edges to the design, an effect that could not be achieved in any other way.

123 Although the wind had died and the clouds given way to a clear, light blue sky, the sea still had heavy rollers. However, instead of breaking over the canoe, they gently lifted it high in the air, then let it slide down the incline. We set out as the first rays of the sun appeared over the horizon and soon began to feel revived as our clothes began to dry. We stayed fairly close to the shore, close enough so that landmarks could be easily seen. For a while we coasted by the thin white strip of sand along which we 123 had hunted for turtle eggs the afternoon before. The land in back of the beach was low swampland and all that could be seen was a 133 thin line of green foliage. But soon we approached Tubinu Point. Here the beach gave way to a jutting headland and the steep sea- [134] ward cliff was a rainbow of colors where bands of ocherous clays of yellow and red were separated by clear white and topped by a [137] heavy line of dark humus. Tall eucalyptus trees stood right up to the edge of the 75-foot cliff. We stayed well clear of the base, for a short but ragged, rocky reef extended out under the water.

Rounding the point, we came to a small inlet edged with the 123 ever-present tangle of mangrove trees, beyond which was another clean white stretch of sandy beach. About this time the puppy grew restless and started roaming the canoe from stern to bow. Once he had reached the bow he climbed up to the very point and stuck his nose into the wind. As the canoe rose and dipped he would lose his balance and I would grab him and hand him to Agnes. But he would not stay put and soon would again be a live figurehead pointing the way. Finally, Albert said, "Let him go." As was to be expected, the next roller knocked little Tchuwiunga off his perch and into the sea he went. As the canoe passed, Albert leaned over and fished the frightened, struggling puppy out of the water and handed him to Agnes, who began rubbing him down. "Him gotta learn," remarked Albert. "Sea bin teach him more better." Soon Tchuwiunga revived his courage and again ventured forward, but this time instead of standing on the bow, he curled up on the bag of flour and slept soundly until we reached our destination. He had indeed learned his lesson well.

The rolling motion, sun, and inactivity had made both Agnes and me drowsy and we were all but asleep when Big Jack woke [201] us with, "Black Joe mob. Him camp Anderaningo." I looked in

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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Fig. 1. Melville Island Coast

123 the direction to which he pointed with his chin, but could see nothing
[201] other than white sand broken in spots with the heavy green of the mangrove jungles. "There," he repeated. "See. Him make big smoke." By straining my eyes and imagination I believed I could see a tiny wisp of white smoke rising above the last patch of green on the furthest point of land.

Distances were deceiving, for the point of land which seemed so many miles away was soon reached. The entrance to the Paluwiunga River was a narrow channel cut through the far edge of a broad sandbank. Rather than circumnavigate the bank, the men decided to go over it, but as the waves breaking over the sand were churned into a tangle of white water by the opposing river current, it was deemed advisable that all surplus passengers disembark. Agnes, clutching the puppy, and I, with my KLM bag, jumped overboard into shoulder-high water and slowly made our way over the bank to the shore. The men also went overboard and, with one on each side, they guided the canoe safely to the quiet water of the river.